



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau



243 Church Street NW, 2nd Floor
Vienna, Virginia 22180

Phone: (800) 616-2242 Fax: (800) 716-2242 TTY: (800) 516-2242

World Wide Web: <http://nccic.org>

PLAYGROUNDS and PLAYGROUND SAFETY

The following is a sample of organizations that have information related to developing safe and effective outdoor play environments. Also included is selected information about licensing requirements and standards for child care centers.

National Organizations

- **The Access Board**
The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
1331 F Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
800-872-2253
World Wide Web: <http://www.access-board.gov>

The Access Board is an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Key responsibilities of the Board include: developing and maintaining accessibility requirements for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and for electronic and information technology; providing technical assistance and training on these guidelines and standards; and enforcing accessibility standards for Federally funded facilities. The following Access Board document relates to playground safety:

- *Guide to ADA Accessibility: Guidelines for Play Areas* (May 2001) is intended to help designers and operators in using the accessibility guidelines for play areas. These guidelines establish minimum accessibility requirements for newly constructed and altered play areas. It provides specifications for elements within a play area to create a general level of usability for children with disabilities. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that children with disabilities are generally able to access the diversity of components provided in a play area. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/guide.pdf>.

- **American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM)**
100 Barr Harbor Drive
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959
610-832-9585
World Wide Web: www.astm.org

ASTM has information on the development of high-quality international standards. It provides detailed information on playground site and surface testing standards, including Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use Standard F 1487-93 and Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment Standard F 1292-95.

■ **Boundless Playgrounds**

45 Wintonbury Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002
860-243-8315

World Wide Web: <http://www.boundlessplaygrounds.org>

Boundless Playgrounds provides coaching and support in project management, universal play environment design, community partnerships, volunteer recruitment, community relations, promotion, and fundraising. It helps create conceptual and equipment-specific play environment designs after identifying project priorities with stakeholders in each community. The organization also coordinates with local landscape architects, engineers, and other professionals who provide local project services for a fee or on a pro-bono basis.

■ **KaBoom!**

2213 M Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20037
202-659-0215, ext. 225

World Wide Web: <http://www.kaboom.org>

KaBOOM! is a national nonprofit organization that specializes in linking individuals, communities, and corporations together to build safe and accessible playgrounds. Through this team effort, KaBoom! helps communities create a model of partnerships that achieve positive and sustainable changes in neighborhoods nationwide. They also provide “hands-on” technical assistance, comprehensive playground manuals and worksheets, and other written materials to guide the process toward community-designed, community-built playgrounds. The following publication is available from KaBoom!:

- The *Getting Started Kit: The Guide to Getting Your Playground Off the Ground* (or “GSK”) contains information on the many factors to consider when planning a playground. KaBOOM! and its funding partners offer selected groups using GSK support during their planning process. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.kaboom.org/pdf/KB!_GSK.pdf.

■ **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

1509 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
800-424-2460

World Wide Web: <http://naeyc.org>

NAEYC is a nonprofit membership organization for individuals interested in early childhood care and education. The organization produces a resource catalog listing brochures, books, and videos, and has a number of useful resources for planning safe and appropriately challenging outdoor play areas. These include:

- “Paying Attention to the Outdoor Environment Is as Important as Preparing the Indoor Environment” (May 2002), in *Young Children* Vol. 57, No. 3, by Karen DeBord, Linda Hestenes, Robin Moore, and Nilda Cosco, describes a new instrument to assess the quality of outdoor environments for preschoolers. The *Preschool Outdoor Environment Assessment Scale* covers five domains: physical environment, interactions, activity areas,

program, and teacher/caregiver role. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org/resources/journal/item-detail.asp?page=2&docID=2716&sesID=1077207781169>.

- *Safe Active Play* (1997), developed by Video Active Production, Inc., is designed to help caregivers identify and avoid the most common causes of serious injuries during active play. The 12 hazards identified in this video are based on a list by the National Playground Safety Institute. Additional information about this 34 minute video is available on the Web at http://naeyc.org/shoppingcart/Itemdetail.aspx?Stock_No=819.
- *Safe Active Play—A Training Manual for Early Childhood Professionals* (2001), by Karen Sokal-Guitierrez, accompanies the video by the same name. Additional information is available on the Web at http://naeyc.org/shoppingcart/Itemdetail.aspx?Stock_No=819B.
- *Playgrounds: Keeping Outdoor Learning Safe* (1996), an *Early Years are Learning Years* release, is available on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly/1996/05.htm>.
- *Playgrounds: Safe & Sound* is a brochure that provides injury prevention information related to supervision of children, equipment safety, surfacing materials, and awareness of developmentally appropriate playground environments. Additional information is available on the Web at http://naeyc.org/shoppingcart/Itemdetail.aspx?Stock_No=552.
- *The Great Outdoors: Restoring Children's Right to Play Outside* (1995), by Mary S. Rivkin, describes exciting playgrounds in the U.S. and other countries and provides practical information on safety, accessibility, and curriculum. Additional information is available on the Web at http://naeyc.org/shoppingcart/Itemdetail.aspx?Stock_No=108.

■ **The National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)**

University of Northern Iowa

School for Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services

Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618

800-554-PLAY (7529) (National Information Hotline)

World Wide Web: <http://www.uni.edu/playground/home.html>

NPPS takes an active part in injury prevention. In this role, it promotes the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Playground Injuries; serves as a recognized national clearinghouse for playground safety information; shares cutting-edge information as a global resource through its Web page; conducts ongoing research in the area of injury prevention; houses the largest compilation of playground-related publications and documents in the nation; sponsors an annual National Playground Safety Week; produces educational videos addressing the roles of various audiences in injury prevention; and serves as a technical resource for parent groups, schools, communities, child care centers, government officials, children's organizations, and other educators.

■ **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)**

Publication Request
Washington, DC 20207
800-638-2772

World Wide Web: <http://www.cpsc.gov>

CPSC has many publications on consumer products and safety issues. For items on specific topics or a list of all of the Commission publications, contact CPSC. The following CPSC publications relate to playground safety:

- “Tips For Public Playground Safety” (1995), *Fact Sheet* Publication # 324, offers consumers playground safety tips from the CPSC *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* (1981). is available on the Web at <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/Playfct.pdf>.
- The *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* (1981) offers detailed information on how to analyze play equipment and arrangements for safety. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>.

Additional Resources

■ *Child Care Center Design Guide* (July 2003), published by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), contains criteria for planning and designing child care centers in GSA-owned or controlled spaces. It includes planning for space and location, site design, interior space design, furnishings and equipment, interior finishes, and technical criteria. The report PBS-100 is available on the web at http://www.gsa.gov/gsa/cm_attachments/GSA_DOCUMENT/Design%20Guide_R2FD38_0Z5RDZ-i34K-pR.pdf.

■ “Beginning Workshop: A History of Outdoor Playspaces: From the Natural Environment to Recycled Plastic” (March/April 2003), in *Child Care Information Exchange*, by Dorothy W. Hewes, describes current and historic use of playspaces. This resource is available on the Web at <http://mail.ccie.com/library/5015001.pdf>. Information about additional articles on playgrounds from the March/April 2003 issue is available on the Web at <https://secure.ccie.com/catalog/search.php?PHPSESSID=ffe420daf6c6f4cce8b324f2ab84a79d&search=design&category=50>.

■ *Child Care Design Guide* (2001), by Anita Rui Olds, published by McGraw-Hill, provides detailed information about the planning and design of child care centers for architects, interior designers, developers, and child care professionals. The book is organized into four parts: 1) the child’s environment; 2) the design process; 3) ingredients of good design; and 4) the functional spaces. Step-by-step explanations are provided for interior and exterior layout and design principles through case studies. It includes licensing and code requirements; operational standards and strategies; and checklists, charts, and graphs. It features over 300 floor plans for infant and toddler, preschool, and after-school spaces, plus areas for outdoor play. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/html/0070474494.html>.

- “Give Children a Place to Explore—Guides for Preschool Playground Design” (March/April 2001), in *Child Care Information Exchange*, by Betsy Caesar, discusses creating a space where children can explore themselves and their world with as few rules and as little adult intervention as possible. Additional information is available on the Web at https://secure.ccie.com/catalog/search.php?position=11&max_rows=10&&&category=50&search=design.

- *Head Start Center Design Guide for Head Start Facilities* (April 2000), by the National Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center, Head Start Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, contains suggested criteria for planning, designing, and renovating Head Start centers. The content is based on the U.S. General Services Administration’s *Child Care Center Design Guide*. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.headstartinfo.org/pdf/hscenterdesignguide.pdf>.

- *Design Standards for Children’s Environments* (2000), by Linda Cain Ruth, published by McGraw-Hill, addresses the design or maintenance of spaces where children are the primary users covering both commercial and residential designs and products. Part I provides anthropometric data of children from birth to age 18; offers dimensions for typical objects within the child’s built environment; synthesizes the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s safety guidelines for play areas; and provides dimensions of typical, and sometimes untypical, products that are often found in children’s environments. Part II features a source list developed for designers, which includes products appropriate for use in children’s environments. Part III outlines the development of children’s abilities and perceptions in the first stages of life from birth to age 10, and offers a bibliography of the most effective and highly regarded resources in the area of children’s design.

- *Facility Management Child Care Resource Book* (July 1999), published by the General Services Administration (GSA), provides maintenance and operations guidelines for managing GSA child care centers within the same standards and level of a GSA-operated facility. Areas covered address cleaning standards and guidelines; equipment funding and inventory; maintenance of living environments and problem areas; checklists for school safety, health, and security; designing and remodeling; and playground maintenance. Also covered are the roles and responsibilities of child care providers, and comments on operation costs and quality. Final sections address issues on fundraising such as legal considerations and steps to fundraising success. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.gsa.gov/gsa/cm_attachments/GSA_DOCUMENT/Facility%20Resource%20Book_R2E-c-oQ_0Z5RDZ-i34K-pR.pdf.

- *Make Playgrounds Safe* (1996), by the National Network for Child Care, discusses steps to take to prevent playground injuries. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.nncc.org/Health/dc25_playground.safe.html.

Regulations and Standards

There are no Federal regulations for early child care and education programs. Each State develops its own minimum standards for licensing early childhood programs. Standards generally address such issues as group size, adult-to-child ratio, staff qualifications, and maintaining safe and healthy environments.

■ Information about space requirements and other regulations for each State is available from the State office responsible for licensing of child care programs. State licensing offices are listed under “Contact Information” on the *State Profiles*, which is available for each State on the NCCIC Web site at <http://nccic.org/statepro.html>.

■ *Individual States’ Child Care Licensure Regulations* of the child care licensing standards for center-based child care for all 50 States and the District of Columbia is available on the Web site of the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/states.htm>.

■ *Stepping Stones (2nd Edition)* (2003), by the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRC), is a compilation of the standards from *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* found to be most directly related to assuring the health and safety of children in group care. This resource is available on the Web at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STEPPING/index.htm>.

■ *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* (2002), 2nd ed., available from the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, addresses many health and safety concerns that arise in children’s settings, including nutrition, cleaning and sanitizing procedures, playground safety, and prevention of communicable diseases. This resource is available on the Web at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/index.html>.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication or resource.